

## OREGON CONSERVATION INNOVATION GRANTS

**Fiscal Year 2016 Announcement of Program Funding**

**Announcement Number: AG-0436-G-15-0001**

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 10.912

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

NRCS Oregon requests proposals for Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) to stimulate the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies. Proposals will be accepted from any eligible entity within the 50 States, the Caribbean Area (Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands), and the Pacific Basin Area (Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) for projects within the state of Oregon. For fiscal year 2016, **up to \$250,000** may be available for the Oregon statewide CIG competition. NRCS will reserve the right to offer more or less funding at the discretion of the State Conservationist. Funds will be awarded through a competitive grants process. The Oregon CIG category available in FY 2016 is the State Resource Concern Category. Proposals are requested from eligible nonfederal government or non-government organizations or individuals for competitive consideration of grant awards for projects between 1 to 3 years in duration. This notice identifies the objectives for Oregon CIG projects, the eligibility criteria for projects, and associated instructions needed to apply for the Oregon CIG. Applicants can request federal funds of up to \$75,000 and must be implemented within the state of Oregon. Proposals that request more than \$75,000 or are multi-state in scope need to submit under the National CIG competition:

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/cig/>.

### PROPOSAL DUE DATE AND ADDRESSES:

**Dates:** Proposals must be submitted in [grants.gov](http://grants.gov) or received in the NRCS Oregon State Office by 4:00 p.m., Pacific Standard Time (PST) on **Monday, May 23, 2016**.

**Addresses:** The address for hand-delivered proposals, submitted using express mail or overnight courier service, and for proposals sent via the U.S. Postal Service is: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service; Conservation Innovation Grants Program; 1201 NE Lloyd Blvd., Suite 900, Portland Oregon 97232; attention to CIG Program Manager.

To submit your application electronically, visit <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/search-grants.html?keywords=cig> and follow the instructions.

For more information contact:

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION.....</b>	<b>3</b>
A. LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY.....	3
B. OVERVIEW .....	3
C. INNOVATIVE CONSERVATION PROJECTS OR ACTIVITIES .....	3
D. STATE COMPONENT CATEGORY .....	4
<i>State Resource Concern Category .....</i>	<i>4</i>
<b>II. FUNDING AVAILABILITY .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>III. PROGRAM REQUIRMENTS AND INFORMATION .....</b>	<b>7</b>
A. APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY .....	7
B. PROJECT ELIGIBILITY .....	7
C. MATCHING FUNDS REQUIREMENTS .....	8
D. EQUIP PAYMENT LIMITATION AND DUPLICATE PAYMENTS.....	8
E. ACTIVITIES LIMITATION AND IMPLEMENTATION .....	8
<b>IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION .....</b>	<b>9</b>
A. HOW TO OBTAIN MATERIALS .....	9
B. APPLICATION CONTENT AND FORMAT .....	9
C. HOW TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION .....	15
D. DUE DATE .....	16
E. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF SUBMISSION.....	16
F. WITHDRAWAL OF PROPOSAL.....	16
G. FUNDING RESTRICTIONS .....	16
H. PATENTS AND INVENTIONS.....	17
I. NATURAL RESOURCES AND HISTORIC PROPERTY REVIEW REQUIRMENTS .....	17
<b>V. APPLICATION REVIEW AND NOTIFICATION INFORMATION.....</b>	<b>17</b>
A. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS .....	17
B. APPLICATION EVALUATION CRITERIA.....	18
<b>VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION .....</b>	<b>21</b>
A. AWARD NOTIFICATION.....	20
B. GRANT AGREEMENT .....	21
C. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW REQUIREMENT .....	22
D. REPORTING REQUIREMENT .....	22
E. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PRIVACY ACT .....	23
<b>VII. AGENCY CONTACTS .....</b>	<b>21</b>

# I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

## A. Legislative Authority

Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) was authorized as part of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance ("CFDA") 10.912 [16 U.S.C. 3839aa-8] under Section 2209 of the Agricultural Act of 2014. The Secretary of Agriculture delegated the authority for the administration of EQIP and CIG to the State Conservationist of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), who is Vice President of the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC). EQIP is funded and administered by NRCS under the authorities of the CCC.

## B. Overview

The purpose of CIG is to stimulate the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies while leveraging the Federal investment in environmental enhancement and protection, in conjunction with agricultural and forestry production. CIG projects are expected to lead to the transfer of conservation technologies, management systems, and innovative approaches (such as market-based systems) into NRCS policy, technical manuals, guides, and references or to the private sector. CIG is used to apply or demonstrate previously proven technology in order to increase adoption with an emphasis on opportunities to scale proven, emerging conservation strategies. CIG promotes sharing of skills, knowledge, technologies, and facilities among communities, governments, and other institutions to ensure that scientific and technological developments are accessible to a wider range of users. CIG funds projects targeting innovative on-the-ground conservation, including pilot projects and field demonstrations. **CIG does not fund research projects**, with the exception of on-farm conservation research. On-farm conservation research is defined as an investigation conducted to answer a specified conservation-related question using a statistically valid design, while employing farm-scale equipment on farm fields. Specifically, a valid study design will use an appropriate number of replications and statistical analysis of results. To the extent NRCS funds research projects through CIG, the Agency will only fund research projects that stimulate innovative approaches to natural resource management in conjunction with agricultural production.

NRCS will accept proposals for single or multi-year projects, not to exceed 3 years, submitted by eligible entities including Federally-recognized Indian Tribes, State and local governments, and non-governmental organizations and individuals. Proposals are accepted from all 50 States, the Caribbean Area (Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands), and the Pacific Islands Area (Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands). **However, the project must be implemented within the State of Oregon.**

Proposals will be screened for completeness and compliance with the provisions of this notice. Incomplete and/or noncompliant proposals will be eliminated from competition, and notification of elimination will be mailed to the applicant. NRCS Oregon will use a 3 tiered review process which is identified in Section V. A. of this notice.

## C. Innovative Conservation Projects or Activities

For the purposes of CIG, the proposed innovative project or activity must promote environmental protection or natural resources enhancement, and encompass development and pilot field testing, demonstration, evaluation, and/or implementation of:

- Conservation adoption incentive systems, including market-based systems, or
- Promising innovative conservation technologies, practices, systems, procedures or approaches

To be given priority consideration, the innovative project or activity must:

- Make use of proven technology or technology that has been studied sufficiently to indicate a good probability for success;
- Demonstrates, tests, evaluates, and verifies environmental (soil, water, air, plants, and animal) effectiveness, utility, affordability, and usability of conservation technology in the field;
- Adapts conservation technologies, practices, systems, procedures, approaches, and incentive systems to improve performance and encourage adoption;
- Introduces conservation systems, approaches, and procedures from another geographic area or agricultural sector;
- Adapts conservation technology, management, or incentive systems to improve performance; and/or
- Demonstrates transferability of knowledge to NRCS Oregon.

## D. State Component Category

For Fiscal Year 2016, one category, the State Resource Concern Category, will be offered in Oregon. This category may include proposals that focus on Market-based Approaches, Ecosystem Services, Environmental Credit Trading, or related conservation approaches and tools. Beginning or Socially Disadvantaged farmers or ranchers or eligible entities servicing Beginning or Socially Disadvantaged farmers or ranchers are encouraged to submit application(s), and will receive special consideration in the selection process. Additionally, proposals must identify the most appropriate resource concern sub-category and subtopic which is listed below. Subtopics that are in **bold print** are considered high priority for the state and will be given additional consideration.

### State Resource Concern Category

#### *i. Energy Subcategory*

The objective of this sub-category is to implement new technologies and/or approaches to conserve energy while indirectly promoting on farm renewable energy opportunities.

Possible subtopics include:

- Demonstrate the use of immediate on-farm feedback devices such as smart meters and their effect on increasing energy conservation and efficiency in the farming sector;
- Evaluate and demonstrate on farm sustainable energy systems (e.g. hydropower, solar, and/or wind) that offset fossil fuel energy use and meet on-farm energy needs, while addressing a primary natural resource concern and increasing energy efficiency and/or reducing environmental contaminants (e.g. greenhouse gas emissions);
- Develop and demonstrate innovative planning and decision aids to assess on-farm energy conservation needs that can be adapted in NRCS planning process

#### *ii. Air Quality and Atmospheric Change Subcategory*

The objective of this sub-category is to demonstrate the capabilities of agricultural and forest conservation systems to improve air quality and/or reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase soil and vegetation carbon sequestration, and to maintain high levels of food and fiber production in the face of changing temperature and precipitation regimes.

Possible subtopics include:

- Demonstrate and evaluate innovative technologies for mitigating air emissions from livestock and poultry production systems via alternative animal and/or manure management strategies. The demonstration should focus on preventing the initial generation of air contaminants and quantify the economics of implementing the alternative management strategy, as well as the

- impact on animal health and performance;
- Demonstrate and quantify ecosystem co-benefits and ancillary benefits associated with implementing NRCS conservation practices for air quality and atmospheric change purposes;
- Develop and demonstrate ambient air quality assessment methodologies and procedures for identifying air quality issues and solutions related to animal and/or crop production systems. The methodologies and procedures should focus on one or more agriculturally related air contaminants and identify opportunities for mitigating emissions at multiple steps in the animal and/or crop production process.

### *iii. Water Quality Subcategory*

The objective of this natural resource concern is to implement new technologies, methods or market-based approaches to maintain, restore, or enhance water quality resources associated with agricultural and forest land uses while sustaining productivity.

Possible subtopics include:

- Technologies support “farmer-friendly” recordkeeping software, including quantification of organic and inorganic nutrients applied by crop and field, dates, irrigation data, and crop nutrient uptake;
- Innovative approaches to animal waste management systems such as low-cost methods of storing animal waste on small farms or economic methods of exporting phosphorus from dairy farms;
- Innovative approaches to management, application and/or treatment of manure;
- Projects designed to stimulate the development of environmental markets and trading. Establishing common credit rates, infrastructure and trading platform forms;
- Demonstrate and evaluate innovative organic pest and nutrient management technologies for single and/or integrated vegetable, row crop, orchard, and/or livestock systems;
- Demonstrate and quantify the effectiveness of bundling conservation measures to avoid, control, and trap nutrient losses from the field;
- Innovative approaches to management and application of inorganic fertilizers;
- Demonstrate and quantify the effectiveness of methods to capture dissolved phosphorus from field runoff and subsurface drainage.

### *iv. Water Quantity Subcategory*

The objective of this natural resource concern is to implement new technologies, methods or market-based approaches to maintain, restore, or enhance water quantity resources associated with agricultural uses while sustaining productivity.

Possible subtopics include:

- Implementation of an on-farm automated and/or remotely-controlled irrigation technologies, including diversion head gates, pumping stations, control valves, and flow monitoring methods in order to control the application of irrigation water based on crop needs, irrigation cycles, soil moisture and precipitation;
- **Innovative technologies and/or approaches that provide an economic incentive to convert irrigated crop lands to dry cropland use. Innovation should demonstrate and evaluate impacts to resources as well as economic and environmental market benefits;**
- Develop economic data and metric which estimates the effects of juniper removal on rangeland hydrologic function and/or quantify water conservation from juniper removal treatments;
- **Develop practical adaptation innovative strategies for cropland, rangeland, and forest systems affected by drought.**

v. *Plant Health/Vigor Subcategory*

The objective of this subcategory is to develop and/or implement new technologies, methods or market-based approaches to maintain, restore, or enhance plant health and vigor on forest, crop, hay, pasture and range lands while sustaining productivity.

Possible subtopics include:

- Innovative methods or technologies in fuels reduction and fire management on forest or rangelands;
- **Develop design and specification criteria using Geosynthetic Reinforced Soil (GRS), for culvert and bridge replacement/installation and demonstrate the innovation in a forested setting;**
- New and innovative approaches/methods to treat annual invasive species on grazing land and promote health, and productivity; including invasive species management;
- **Innovations or methods to assess, enhance, and preserve cultural plants (first foods) critical to tribal lands;**
- **Develop planning and decision aids to assess, enhance and restore Oak woodlands;**
- **Development and/or demonstration of innovative on farm automated and/or remotely controlled livestock watering monitoring systems on isolated range areas to improve livestock distribution and improve range forage health.**

vi. *Soil Quality Subcategory*

The objective of this subcategory is to implement new technologies, methods or market-based approaches to maintain, restore, or enhance soil resources associated with agricultural and forest land uses while sustaining productivity.

Possible subtopics include:

- **Development of a forest soil health tool, that identifies best management practices and actions that improve on soil health based on soil type, eco region, or habitat type for Oregon;**
- Development of efficient technologies for producing and utilizing biochar to enhance soil quality, retain plant nutrients on site, sequester carbon to mitigate climate change, and produce bioenergy as a byproduct;
- **Demonstrate and quantify the impacts of soil health promoting practices (e.g. adaptive grazing management or systems) on rangeland health and productivity.**
- Technologies and methods (e.g. carbon fractions, enzymes, other) for early prediction of soil quality degradation;
- Demonstrate and quantify impacts of soil health promoting practices (e.g. no-tillage, cover crops, and crop rotations) on yield, yield variability, and economics of crop production across a range of soils, cropping systems, and climates;
- **Demonstrate and quantify the impacts of Soil Health Management Systems (in the Willamette Valley) on pest prevention, avoidance and suppression;**
- Demonstrate and quantify at a watershed scale the water quality impacts of installing conservation systems that support and improve soil health;
- **Demonstrate and quantify the impacts of Soil Health Management Systems (e.g., cover crops, reduced tillage) on key soil health attributes (e.g., available water holding capacity, disease suppression, nutrient cycling) and determine the extent to which the rates of change are influenced by climate, organic input chemical composition/placement, and soil properties (e.g., particle size, mineralogy). This should be conducted across a range of inherent soil properties, cropping systems,**

and climates to develop a Decision Support Tool that promotes selection and design of the components of a Soil Health Management System;

- **Demonstrate and quantify pest control technologies (e.g. slug control in the Willamette Valley, weed management in wheat-fallow cropping systems, etc.) that facilitate the implementation of Soil Health Management Systems.**

*vii. Wildlife Habitat Subcategory*

The objective of this subcategory is to implement new technologies, methods or market-based approaches for environmentally sound wildlife habitat management while sustaining agricultural and forest productivity.

Possible subtopics include:

- **Demonstrate methods and quantify the impacts of grazing as a wildlife habitat management tool for Sage Grouse;**
- Development of cost-effective strategies to restore and/or maintain (such as grazing prescriptions for plant community objectives) native plant communities;
- Demonstrate wildlife-livestock coexistence practices that minimize contact between livestock and wildlife predators and reduce livestock mortality.

## **II. FUNDING AVAILABILITY**

For Fiscal year 2016, NRCS Oregon anticipates up to **\$250,000 may be available** for the State CIG competition. NRCS will reserve the right to offer more or less funding at the discretion of the State Conservationist.

CIG will fund single and multi-year projects, not to exceed 3 years (anticipated project start date of September 1, 2016). Funds will be awarded through a statewide competitive grants process. The maximum award amount for any project will not exceed \$75,000.

## **III. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS AND INFORMATION**

### **A. Applicant Eligibility**

CIG applicants must be a federally recognized Indian tribe, State or local unit of government, non-governmental organization or individual.

### **B. Project Eligibility**

To be eligible for CIG, **projects must involve agricultural producers.** In addition, all agricultural producers receiving direct or indirect payments through participation in a CIG project must also meet the EQIP eligibility requirements as set forth in §1466.6(b)(1) through (3). Refer to <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/eqip> for more information on EQIP eligibility requirements. Participating producers are not required to have an EQIP contract.

To participate in EQIP financial assistance, an individual or entity must meet the eligibility requirements in 7 C.F.R. 1466.6, which include the following:

Criteria	Potential Verification Documentation*
Be in compliance with the highly erodible land and wetland conservation provisions (7 C.F.R. Part 12)	Documentation of their compliance status can be obtained by the producer at their local USDA Service Center or through the USDA customer service on-line portal
Have an interest in the agricultural operation as defined in 7 C.F.R. Part 1400	Documentation of their farm interest can be obtained by the producer at their local USDA Service Center or through the USDA customer service on-line portal showing that the producer has farm records established
Have control of the land for the term of the proposed contract period	Documentation can be provided in the form of a deed, lease, or other documents which show the producer has adequate control for the term of the proposed contract period
The average adjusted gross income of the individual, joint operation, or legal entity may not exceed \$900,000, unless not less than 66.66 percent of the average adjusted gross income of the person, joint operation, or legal entity is average adjusted gross farm income (7 C.F.R. Part 1400)	If using FY 2016 CIG funding, documentation of a producer's AGI eligibility status can be obtained by the producer at their local USDA Service Center, or through the USDA customer service on-line portal.

\*Many of the verification documents will require that the producer have current records established with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) or require that the producer establish new records.

### C. Matching Funds Requirements

Selected applicants may receive CIG grants for up to 50 percent of the total project cost not to exceed \$75,000. CIG recipients must provide non-Federal funding equal to the amount of Federal funds requested. **Non-Federal funds must be derived from cash and/or in-kind sources.**

Matching funds must be secured before enactment of the grant agreement. Proposals must include written verification of commitments supporting (including both cash and in-kind contributions) from third parties. Additional information about matching funds can be found at [2 CFR 215](#).

### D. EQIP Payment Limitation and Duplicate Payments

The following payment requirements apply to CIG:

- CIG funds are awarded through grant agreements. These grant agreements are not EQIP contracts; thus, CIG awards in and of themselves are not limited by the payment limitation found in section 1240G of the Food Security Act of 1985, 16 U.S.C. 3839aa-7, which imposes a \$450,000 payment limitation for all payments made to persons or legal entities under an EQIP contract entered into between FY2014 through FY2018.
- All agricultural producers receiving a direct or indirect payment through participation in a CIG project must meet the eligibility requirements of 7 CFR § 1466.6(b)(1) through (3).
- In addition, section 1240B, 16 U.S.C. 3839aa-2, prohibits duplicative payments. Accordingly,



direct or indirect payments cannot be made for a practice for which an individual or entity has already received funds, or is contracted to receive funds through any USDA conservation programs (e.g., Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Conservation Stewardship Program, Regional Conservation Partnership Program or Agricultural Conservation Easement Program).

## **E. Activities Limitation and Implementation**

Technologies and approaches that are eligible for funding in a project's geographic area through EQIP are ineligible for CIG funding except where the use of those technologies and approaches demonstrates clear innovation. The burden falls on the applicant to sufficiently describe the innovative features of the proposed technology or approach. The Oregon NRCS EQIP Practices Payment List can be obtained at: [http://www.or.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/index.html#Regular\\_EQIP](http://www.or.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/index.html#Regular_EQIP)

The grantee is responsible for providing the technical assistance required to successfully implement and complete the project. NRCS will designate a technical contact to provide oversight for projects receiving an award.

## **IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

All standard forms necessary for CIG submissions are posted on the following website: [Grants.gov - Forms Repository](#).

### **A. How to Obtain Materials**

The announcement for the 2016 Oregon CIG funding opportunity, application [checklist](#) and links to the required application forms can be found on the following websites:

[www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) and <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/or/programs/?cid=stelprdb1243773>

### **B. Application Content and Format**

Proposals must contain the content, format, and information set forth below in order to receive consideration for funding. Applicants should not assume prior knowledge on the part of NRCS or others as to the relative merits of the project described in the application. Applicants must submit only one original copy of the application in the following format:

- Each page must be on numbered 8½" x 11" white paper that has one-inch margins and
- The text of the application must be typed single spaced in a font no smaller than 12-point.

Proposals must include all required forms and narrative sections described below. Proposals that fail to comply with the required content and format will not be considered for funding. If submitting proposals for more than one project, submit a separate application for each project. **Material exceeding stated page limits or incomplete proposals will not be considered.**

#### **1. Application Cover Sheet:**

(Standard Form 424 Application for Federal Assistance) Applicants must submit this document for each project application. Standard Form 424 can be downloaded from [Grants.gov - Forms Repository](#).

## 2. Executive Summary:

(2 page maximum, single sided, single spaced) Applicant must submit a brief description including the information below:

- a) Project title
- b) Project start and end dates (Projects should begin September 1, 2016)
- c) State resource subcategory (Energy, Air Quality Atmospheric Change, Water Quality, Water Quantity, Plant Health/Vigor, Soil Health or Wildlife Habitat) and subtopic.  
**(Proposals must choose the most appropriate resource concern sub-category and subtopic identified in Section I. D)**
- d) Project director name, contact information (including e-mail)
- e) Names and affiliations of project collaborators
- f) Project purpose
- g) Project deliverables/products
- h) Project scope/area
- i) Project summary

## 3. Project Description:

The project description must be **limited to 7 pages (single-sided, single-spaced) in length** and include the information listed below. Pages in excess of the 7-page limit will be discarded and not evaluated (Bibliography, resumes and references will be included in the page count for the project page limit).

- a) **Project background:** Describe the issue or resource problem, and the history of, and need for, the proposed innovation. Provide evidence that the proposed innovation has been studied sufficiently to indicate a good probability for success of the project;
- b) **Project objectives:** Be specific using qualitative and quantitative measures, if possible, to describe the project's purpose and goals, and relationship to the categories/special interest areas selected in Section I.D. Describe how the project is innovative;
- c) **Project methods:** Describe clearly the methodology of the project and the tools or processes that will be used to implement the project;
- d) **Geographic location and size of project or project area:** Describe the geographic location of the project and the relative size and scope (e.g., acres, farm types and demographics, etc.) of the project area. Provide a map, if possible;
- e) **EQIP eligible producer participation:** Estimate the number of EQIP eligible producers involved in the project and describe the extent of their involvement (**Note: Producers receiving direct or indirect payments through participation in a CIG project must also meet the EQIP eligibility requirements see Section III B).**
- f) **Project action plan and timeline:** Provide a table listing project actions, timeframes, and associated milestones through project completion. Anticipated project start date of **September 1, 2016.**
1. **Project management:** Give a detailed description of how the project will be organized and managed. Include a list of key project personnel, their relevant education or experience, and their anticipated contributions to the project. Explain the level of participation required in the project by government and non-government entities. Identify who will participate in monitoring and evaluating the project, including their institutional affiliations and qualifications for conducting project monitoring and evaluation.
- h) **Project deliverables/products:** Provide a list of specific deliverables and products that

will allow NRCS to monitor project progress and payment. The proposal shall include a set of technical deliverables designed to evaluate the performance and broader applicability of the project being proposed for implementation. In addition to project-specific deliverables, selected applicants will be required to provide the following:

- 1) Semi-annual reports,
- 2) Supplemental narratives that explain and support payment requests,
- 3) A final report,
- 4) Performance items specific to the project that indicate progress,
- 5) A new technology and innovative approach fact sheet,
- 6) Participation in at least one NRCS sponsored event during the grant period.

The applicant may submit a proposed schedule of deliverables with the corresponding schedule of payments (template is available at <http://www.or.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cig/index.html>) for deliverables identified in the proposal. Payments for deliverables are based on a quarterly percentage of requested funds.

- i) **Benefits and results expected to be transferable:** Identify the results and benefits to be derived from the proposed project activities and explain how the results will be measured. Explain how NRCS Oregon and producers will benefit from the innovation. In addition, describe how results will be communicated to others via outreach activities;
- j) **Project evaluation:** Describe the methodology or procedures to be followed to evaluate the project, determine technical feasibility, and quantify the results of the project. Grant recipients will be required to provide a semi-annual report of progress, quarterly financial reports, and a final project report to NRCS. Instructions for submitting quarterly reports will be detailed in the grant agreement.

#### **4. Assessment of Environmental and Social Impacts:**

Describe and assess the potential environmental and social impacts of the proposed project. The description of the potential environmental and social impacts must address all potential beneficial and adverse impacts of the proposed action. A full description and assessment of the potential impacts to all environmental resources must be disclosed. The length of the analysis should be commensurate with the complexity of the project proposed and the environmental resources impacted directly, indirectly, or cumulatively. Where possible, information on environmental impacts should be quantified, such as number of acres of wetlands impacted, amount of carbon sequestration estimated, etc. Environmental resources include soil, water, air, plants, and animals, as well as other resources protected by law, regulation, Executive Order, and agency policy. In addition to describing impacts, applicants are required to assess the significance or degree of potential environmental impact of the proposed project on environmental resources.

The NRCS Environmental Evaluation Worksheet, form NRCS-CPA-52, may be used as a guide to document the scope of environmental impacts. The NRCS-CPA-52 will be required if the project is selected for funding. The form is available at:

[http://www.or.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/conservation\\_planning.html](http://www.or.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/conservation_planning.html). Applicants should consult with NRCS concerning the environmental impact of the project proposal outlined in this section.

Please be aware that proposals for projects with potentially adverse impacts may need to be modified in order to achieve acceptable and beneficial levels of environmental impact. NRCS may choose not to select projects that cannot be modified.

In addition, applicants must permit NHPA Section 106 review and consultation by NRCS State or Area Office with required consulting parties (such as the pertinent SHPO and federally recognized Tribes) prior to the implementation of conservation practices and/or activities for their

potential to affect cultural resources.

## 5. Budget Information:

The budget portion of the application consists of the three parts described below

- 1) **Standard Form (SF) 424A Budget Information- Non-Construction Programs:** Fill in all spaces as appropriate. Section B, Item 6, column 1 should reflect the NRCS funds and Column 2 should reflect the applicants required match funds. If your match funds are from multiple sources, you may show that in the remaining columns of Item 6. This form is the summary budget for the project. SF 424A Budget Information Non-Construction Programs 424A is available at: [Grants.gov - Forms Repository](https://www.grants.gov/forms-repository)
  - 2) **Detailed Budget Description:** A specific item-by-item breakdown of the totals provided in Item 6 of the SF-424A should be provided. This detail should show what individual costs were added together to arrive at the totals presented in each of object class categories on the SF-424. The format of this information, which can be in a chart, spreadsheet, table, etc., should be readable in 8 ½” by 11” printable pages. The information needs to be presented in such a way that the evaluators and NRCS can readily understand what expenses will be incurred to support the project. The breakdown of the federal share and the applicants match should be shown separately as in the SF-424A, not combined. Items provided to NRCS in the budget details should include, but are not limited to, the following:
    - a. Personnel: a list of personnel, their salary, hourly rate, hours, percent time.
    - b. Fringe Benefits: percent of salary, differing rates for different staff.
    - c. Travel: basis for airfare, mileage rate (NTE Federal govt. rate), per diem, hotel, car rental, how many trips, how many days, number of staff.
    - d. Equipment: type of equipment, cost per item, per batch, per load, quantity.
    - e. Supplies: type of supplies, cost per item, per batch, per load, quantity (a general statement such as “office supplies \$3,000” is not acceptable).
    - f. Contractual: cost of each subcontract – the total of all subcontracts should be shown on the SF-424, but an itemized budget should be provided for each potential subcontract. The budgets for the subcontracts should follow this same format and be submitted with your proposal.
    - g. Construction: N/A.
    - h. Other: cost per item, per batch, per load, quantity.
  - 3) **Budget Narrative:** Provide a detailed narrative (**4 pages maximum, single-sided and single-spaced**) in support of the budget for the project, broken down by each project year. Discuss how the budget specifically supports the proposed activities. Explain how budget items are essential to achieving project objectives. Justify the project cost effectiveness and include justification for personnel and consultant salaries with a description of duties. In addition to the information above, any subcontractors and consultants must also submit a statement of work. The budget narrative should support the federal funds requested and the applicant’s match funds.
- ## 6. Indirect Costs:
- a. Applicants wishing to claim indirect costs must have a federally approved indirect cost rate. The approved indirect cost rate must be included in the application package.
  - b. An indirect cost rate not to exceed 15 percent may be approved for applicants without a preexisting, federally approved indirect cost rate. To be considered for an indirect cost rate not to exceed 15 percent, applicants must submit an indirect cost rate proposal with the application which includes the following:

- 1) Applicant's written policy for allocating and identifying direct and indirect costs;
  - 2) Contact person information regarding who prepared proposal;
  - 3) Breakdown of indirect salaries by position title and amount;
  - 4) Line item expenditure description and how the costs are being allocated between direct and indirect costs;
  - 5) Applicant's tax identification number; and
  - 6) Signed certification attesting that (i) all cost in proposal are allowable under the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) cost principles; (ii) costs treated as indirect have not been claimed as direct; (iii) similar types of costs have been accounted for consistently and (iv) the applicant will notify the Federal government of any account changed that would affect the rate. Signature should be of approving official for applicant or applicant's Chief financial officer.
- c. If applicant does not have a federally approved indirect cost rate, it is at the agency's (NRCS) discretion whether to allow indirect cost.

## **7. Matching:**

Matching funds must be secured before enactment of the grant agreement. Proposals must include written verification of commitments supporting both cash and in-kind contributions from non-federal third parties.

### **Cash Match**

For any third party cash contributions, a separate pledge agreement is required for each contribution, signed by the authorized organizational representative of the contributing organization and the applicant organization, which must include: (1) the name, address, and telephone number of the contributor, (2) the name of the applicant organization, (3) the title of the project for which the contribution is made, (4) the dollar amount of the cash contribution, and (5) a statement that the contributor will pay the cash contribution during the grant period.

### **In-Kind Match**

"In-kind" refers to non-cash contributions of goods or services made by third-party individuals or organizations to support projects. Examples of "in-kind" contributions include work done by unpaid volunteers and donations of supplies, facilities, or equipment. In-kind contributions must be necessary to accomplish program activities and verifiable.

For any third-party in-kind contributions, a separate pledge agreement is required for each contribution, signed by the authorized organizational representatives of the contributing organization and the applicant, which must include: (1) the name, address, and telephone number of the contributor, (2) the name of the applicant's organization, (3) the title of the project for which the contribution is made, (4) a good faith estimate of the current fair market value of the third-party in-kind contribution, and (5) a statement that the contributor will make the contribution during the grant period.

The value of applicant contributions to the project will be established in accordance with the applicable cost principles. Applicants should refer to OMB Circulars and Cost Principles for additional guidance and other requirements relating to matching and allowable costs. Additional information can be found at [2 CFR 215](#).

- 8. List of Letters of Support:** Include entity name, location, role, and if a commitment of cash or in-kind support has been made, the type (cash vs. in-kind) and value.

Note: NRCS may conduct reference checks to ensure that organizations identified are supportive and involved with the project.

**9. Declaration of Previous CIG Project(s) Involvement and Past Performance:**

Identify any previously awarded National or State CIG projects related to this proposal and any of their principal investigators and please respond to item 9 a. below. If you have never received an NRCS CIG, but have received other Federal or non-Federal assistance agreements (an assistance agreement is a grant or cooperative agreement and not a contract), please respond to item 9 b. below. If you have never received any type of Federal or non-Federal assistance agreements, please indicate this in your proposal.

a. Applicant has previously received an NRCS CIG

Identify the NRCS CIG(s) you currently have or have received in the past. Detail the purpose, outcomes to date, and how this new proposal relates to the previous award. For up to the five most recent projects (if within the past two years), demonstrate how you successfully managed the grant(s), and successfully performed all phases of work under the previous or existing grant(s), including whether the desired outcomes of the project(s) were met by providing information on the following:

1. Funds Expenditure: the balance of grant funds currently remaining.
2. Describe your compliance with grant requirements, including, but not limited to, information regarding your compliance with the work plan, schedule, terms and conditions, and timely reporting (e.g., semiannual progress reports, financial status reports, and any other required submittals).  
Accomplishments: Describe your success using NRCS grant funds, including whether you reported accomplishments to NRCS.

b. Applicant has received other Federal and/or non-Federal assistance agreements

3. Identify current and/or prior federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements. Please provide information on no more than five of your most recent assistance agreements (if received within the past two years).  
Describe your history of successfully managing these agreements and performing the agreements including meeting and complying with reporting requirements, submitting final acceptable technical reports, and reporting on whether you were making progress towards achieving the results under those agreements and, if not, whether you explained why.

**10. Declaration of EQIP Eligible Producer Eligibility and Involvement:**

Applicants must include a statement indicating that the proposed project will involve EQIP eligible producers (Section III B.) and describe and certify their level of involvement in the project. **Proposals that do not involve EQIP eligible producers are ineligible for a CIG award.**

**11. Declaration of Beginning Farmer or Rancher, Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher, Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher:**

If an applicant identifies themselves as a beginning farmer or rancher, or Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher, or socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher, and avail themselves of the in-kind contribution exception, applicants must make a declaration in writing of their status as a Beginning Farmer or Rancher, or Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher, or Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher or a community-based organization comprised of or representing these entities. Definitions of Beginning Farmer or Rancher, Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher can be found in Section III D.

## 12. Certifications:

All proposals must include a signed Standard Form (SF) 424B - Assurances, Non-construction Programs. SF 424B may be found at: [Grants.gov - Forms Repository](https://www.grants.gov/forms-repository) or by contacting the Oregon NRCS State office. In addition, applicants, by signing and submitting an application, assure and certify that they are in compliance with the following federal regulations:

- 2 CFR Part 417, [Government wide Debarment and Suspension \(Non-procurement\)](#)
- 2 CFR Part 200, [New Restrictions on Lobbying](#)
- 2 CFR Part 421, [Government-wide Requirements for Drug Free Workplace \(Financial Assistance\)](#)

## 13. DUNS and SAM Registration:

**The following items must be obtained prior to entering into an agreement with the Federal Government.** Applicants are encouraged to apply early for their Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS)/System for Award Management (SAM) number.

- DUNS Number:** A Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number is a unique nine-digit sequence recognized as the universal standard for identifying and keeping track of over 70 million businesses worldwide. CIG applicants must obtain a DUNS Number. Information on how to obtain a DUNS number can be found at: <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform> or by calling 1-866-705-5711. Please note that the registration may take up to 14 business days to complete.
- Required SAM Registration:**  
The System for Award Management (SAM) is a government-wide registry for vendors doing business with the federal government which replaced Centralized Contractor Registration (CCR). SAM centralizes information about federal financial assistance recipients and also provides a central location for you to change your organizational information. Upon receipt of the DUNS number, it is the participant's responsibility to maintain current information with SAM. If you had an active record in CCR, you have an active record in SAM. To register, go to: <https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/>. Please allow a minimum of 5 days to complete the SAM registration.

## C. How to Submit an Application

Applicants may submit proposals electronically through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). Alternatively, proposals may be submitted via express mail, overnight courier service, or U.S. Postal Service to the addresses listed below. **Proposals submitted by fax will not be considered.** All proposals must contain all of the elements of a complete package and meet the requirements in Section IV. Instructions for electronically submitting the required standard forms, and instructions for adding attachments are posted on [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). The use of Federal Government postage-paid envelopes, e-mail and/or equipment in filing proposals is a violation of federal law and will disqualify you from consideration.

**Note: NRCS is not responsible for any technical malfunctions or web site problems related to [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) or e-mailed submissions. Applicants should begin the [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) process or send their e-mail in advance of the submission deadline to avoid problems.**



The address for submitting a proposal via express mail, overnight courier service or US Postal Service is:

USDA-NRCS, CIG Program  
1201 NE Lloyd Blvd, Suite 900  
Portland, Oregon 97232

#### **D. Due Date**

**Proposals must be received in the NRCS Oregon State Office, 1201 NE Lloyd Blvd, Suite 900 Portland, Oregon 97232 by 4:00 p.m. Pacific Standard Time (PST) on Monday, May 23, 2016.** The applicant assumes the risk of any delays in application delivery. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit completed proposals early to ensure timely receipt by NRCS.

#### **E. Acknowledgement of Submission**

NRCS will acknowledge receipt of timely proposals via e-mail. An applicant who does not receive such an e-mail acknowledgement within 30 days of their submission but believes he/she submitted a timely application must contact the NRCS program contact below within 30 days. Failure to do so may result in the application not being considered.

CIG Program Contact: Todd M. Peplin

USDA-NRCS, CIG Program  
1201 NE Lloyd Blvd, Suite 900  
Portland, Oregon 97232  
Phone: (503) 414-3292  
E-mail: [todd.peplin@or.usda.gov](mailto:todd.peplin@or.usda.gov)

#### **F. Withdrawal**

Proposals may be withdrawn by written notice at any time before selections are made. Proposals may be withdrawn by the applicant, or by an authorized representative.

#### **G. Funding Restrictions**

Awardees may not use unrecovered indirect costs as part of their matching funds.

CIG funds may not be used to pay any of the following costs unless otherwise permitted by law, or approved in writing by the Authorized Departmental Officer in advance of incurring such costs:

- Costs above the amount of funds authorized for the project;
- Costs incurred prior to the effective date of the grant;
- Costs which lie outside the scope of the approved project and any amendments;
- Entertainment costs, regardless of their apparent relationship to project objectives;
- Compensation for injuries to persons, or damage to property arising out of project activities;
- Consulting services performed by a Federal employee during official duty hours when such consulting services result in the payment of additional compensation to the employee;
- Renovation or refurbishment of research or related spaces; the purchase or installation of fixed equipment in such spaces; and the planning, repair, rehabilitation, acquisition, or



construction of buildings or facilities.

This list is not exhaustive. Questions regarding the allowances of particular items of cost should be directed to the administrative contact person listed on Section VII of the document.

## **H. Patents and Inventions**

Allocation of rights to patents and inventions shall be in accordance with [7 CFR §3019.36](#). USDA receives a royalty-free license for Federal Government use, reserves the right to require the patentee to license others in certain circumstances, and requires that anyone exclusively licensed to sell the invention in the United States must normally manufacture it domestically.

## **I. Natural Resources and Historic Property Review Requirements**

1. The Council on Environmental Quality's National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations at 40 CFR parts 1500-1508 and the NRCS regulation that implements NEPA at 7 CFR part 650 require that an environmental review be prepared for Federal actions that may have environmental effects. NRCS financial assistance under the CIG program requires compliance with these regulations. As part of the application packet, applicants are required to provide environmental information pertaining to their project if there will be actions with potential to affect the environment to help NRCS determine the appropriate documentation required to comply with NEPA and NRCS regulations. If the application is selected for funding, the NRCS Program Contact, Technical Contact and NRCS Environmental Liaison will coordinate with the selected applicant concerning documentation for compliance with NEPA. The selected applicant will be required to prepare and pay for the preparation of the appropriate NEPA document (e.g., Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement if required for NEPA compliance). Grant funding cannot be approved until the environmental review requirements demonstrating compliance with NEPA are met.

2. The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106 and its implementing regulations (36 CFR Part 800), and other related authorities, require federal agencies to determine if a project has the potential to cause an effect to historic properties and, if yes, if they are adverse and how the effects may be addressed. This NHPA review and compliance in accordance with Section 106 of the NHPA and implementing regulations at 36 CFR Part 800 must be completed by NRCS and may not be delegated. This compliance process includes consultation with SHPOs, Tribes, THPOs, NHOs, and the appropriate preservation community regarding identification, evaluation of NRHP eligibility, evaluation of effects, and if the effects are adverse, treatment. This treatment may include avoidance or other forms of mitigation of adverse effects. This mitigation will occur after the grant is awarded but before it is implemented.

## **V. APPLICATION REVIEW AND NOTIFICATION INFORMATION**

### **A. Review and Selection Process**

#### **1. Screening:**

Proposals will be screened to ensure basic eligibility requirements (Section III) and application content and format (Section IV) are met. Incomplete proposals will be eliminated from competition, and notification of elimination will be mailed to the applicant. Proposals

submitted that are listed on the Excluded Parties List System (EPLS) will not be considered. The EPLS can be viewed at <http://epls.gov>. In addition to the initial screening process proposals will be reviewed to ensure there is no duplication of efforts or ethic concerns and the proposal is consistent with overall EQIP objectives.

## **2. Evaluation:**

Complete eligible proposals will be evaluated on a 3 tiered review process;

- 1) Basin/local review (local adaptation and integration to conservation implementation strategies),
- 2) Technical review (technical feasibility and application of the project as outlined in V.B. Criteria for Proposal Evaluation), and
- 3) Executive review (integration and value to NRCS Oregon's strategic approach).

NRCS Basin Team Leaders will assemble a basin review team to evaluate and prioritize proposals based on local adaptation and integration to local conservation implementation strategies as identified in Section V. B1.

The Technical Review Team (TRT) consists of technical specialists (NRCS and other partners) will evaluate proposals on its technical merit and criteria identified in Section V.B2.

The Executive Review Board (ERB) reviews recommendations from the basin and technical review teams, in addition to the proposals value to NRCS Oregon's strategic approach. Final selection will be made by the NRCS Oregon State Conservationist.

## **B. Application Evaluation Criteria**

Proposals must identify a primary resource subcategory and subtopic they are addressing in their application. You can indicate additional resource categories that are addressed by the proposal, however, in order to assist in the evaluation process a primary subcategory must be identified.

### **1. Basin Review Process:**

The following criteria are used by the basin review team to evaluate proposals.

#### **A. Strategic Approach**

- Project relation to the local conservation implementation strategy(s) (CIS).
- Project integrates with NRCS Oregon's strategic approach.
- Facilitates a systems approach in addressing the resource concern.
- Promotes environmental enhancement & protection in conjunction with agricultural production.

#### **B. Applicability**

- Adapts conservation technologies, practices, management, systems, procedures, approaches, and incentive systems to improve performance and encourage adoption.
- Potential for producers and landowners to use the innovative technology or technologies.
- Improves and enhances existing conservation efforts in the basin.

#### **C. Transferability**

- Potential to transfer the approach or technology statewide or to a broader audience or other geographic or socio-economic areas, including limited resource, socially disadvantaged and other traditionally underserved producers and communities.
- Potential for NRCS to successfully use the innovative approach or methods.
- Project will result in the development of useful technical materials to assist field staff in planning.

## 2. Technical Review Process:

The following criteria are used by the technical review team (TRT) to evaluate proposals.

### A. Purpose, Approach, and Goals

- Design and implementation of project based on sound methodology and/or demonstrated technology.
- Promotes environmental enhancement & protection in conjunction with agricultural production.
- Project outcome is clearly measurable.
- Potential for successful completion.
- Both beneficial and adverse impacts are considered and a significant level of improvement will be achieved.

### B. Innovative Technology or Approach

- Project is innovative (Statewide, regional within Oregon, or local in nature).
- Project conforms to description of innovative projects or activities in proposal request announcement.
- Technical design and implementation strategy is based on sound science.
- There is a good likelihood that the project will be successfully completed on time and within budget.
- The project clearly promotes environmental enhancement and protection in conjunction with agricultural production.

### C. Project Management

- Timeline and milestones are clear and reasonable.
- Project has sufficient staff with the necessary technical expertise to successfully accomplish the objectives and timeframes of the project.
- Budget is adequately explained and justified.
- The proposal includes a proposed schedule of deliverables with a corresponding schedule of payments.
- Experience and capacity to partner with and gain the support of other organizations, institutions and agencies.

### D. Transferability

- Potential for producers and landowners to use the innovative technology or technologies.
- Project has a direct relationship to an NRCS Conservation Implementation Strategy (CIS) in addressing a resource concern.
- Potential to transfer the approach or technology nationally or to a broader audience or other geographic or socio-economic areas, including limited resource, socially disadvantaged and other traditionally underserved producers and communities.
- Potential for NRCS to successfully use the innovative approach or methods.
- Project will result in the development of technical or related technology transfer materials (technical standards, technical notes, guide sheets, handbooks, software, etc.).

## 3. Executive Review Process:

The following criteria are used by the executive review team to evaluate proposals.

- Value in addressing the resource concern and enhancing conservation on agricultural lands in Oregon.
- Strengthens and further promotes NRCS Oregon's conservation programs.

- Strengthens technical assistance provided to agricultural producers.
- Enhances and supports other partner conservation programs.

### **C. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates**

CIG Awards are anticipated to be announced by July 29, 2016. Funds are not awarded until an agreement is signed by both NRCS and the grantee. **Applicants should plan their projects based on a project start date of September 1, 2016.**

## **VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

### **A. Award Notification**

Applicants who have been selected for funding will receive a letter of official notification from the NRCS Oregon State Office. However, all selections are contingent upon successful completion of the environmental, cultural and historic properties/resources review process by the appropriate NRCS State or Area Office and financial review.

### **B. Grant Agreement**

The Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) will use a grant agreement with selected applicants to document participation in the Oregon CIG program state component.

The grant will permit the NRCS National Technical Contact to be involved in overseeing the work performed by the selected recipients. Although NRCS will negotiate precise terms and conditions as part of the award process, the anticipated Federal involvement for this project may include:

- close monitoring of the recipient's performance to verify the results
- collaborating during performance of the scope of work
- reviewing substantive terms of proposed contracts
- reviewing qualifications of key personnel (NRCS will not select employees or contractors employed by the award recipient)
- reviewing and commenting on reports prepared under the agreement (the final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient)

### **C. Environmental Review Requirements**

Upon notification of selection, the applicant must contact NRCS to determine the scope and level of NEPA documentation required for the project. The environmental documentation prepared to meet NEPA requirements must be prepared prior to award of grant funds (NRCS-CPA-52 form available at: [http://www.or.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/conservation\\_planning.html](http://www.or.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/conservation_planning.html)).

Selected applicants may be required to prepare and pay for the preparation of the appropriate NEPA document(s) if an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement is needed. Grant funds cannot be awarded until the environmental review requirements demonstrating compliance with NEPA are met.

Upon notification of selection, the recipient must contact the NRCS State Office to discuss if National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106 review is needed. The NRCS State Conservationist and appropriate staff, including the State Resources Conservationist, Cultural Resources Specialist (CRS) or Coordinator (CRC) will help and, under the direction of the State Conservationist, are responsible for completing this compliance, consultation and review. Additionally, in accordance with Section 106 of the NHPA, implementing regulations for Section 106 (36 CFR Part 800), and with USDA regulations on consultation with Tribes, and related authorities, the NRCS State Conservationist, using appropriate historic preservation staff such as the CRS or CRC, shall consult with concerned federally recognized Indian Tribes and the State Historic Preservation Officer ). NRCS may not delegate or assign consultation with Tribes or the SHPO to the recipient or other parties and must carry out agency historic preservation responsibilities quickly as possible and prior to implementation of the grant project by the recipient. The State Office may have programmatic agreements in place to help facilitate and streamline this process. State CRSs and CRCs have extensive experience in determining if Section 106 review and compliance is needed. If Section 106 review and compliance is needed, it must be completed prior to expenditure of funds.

## **D. Reporting Requirements**

Selected applicants will be required to submit a SF-425, Federal Financial Report, quarterly and no later than 90 days after completion of project. In addition, every six months the selected applicant must submit a written performance progress report to the NRCS program contact and the NRCS technical contact. Each progress report shall cover work performed during the previous 6-month period, including any funded or unfunded time extensions, a comparison of actual accomplishments to project goals, and a statement of work projected to be completed in the next 6-month period. After completion of the grant a final report is required detailing the projects results.

To satisfy the requirements of EQIP ([7 CFR 1466](#)) compliance measures, the selected applicant is required to submit as a component of the semi-annual progress report:

- A list of producers, identified by name and social security number, of all EQIP-eligible producers or entities involved in the project.
- The dollar amount of direct and indirect payment made to each individual producer or entity for any structural, vegetative, or management practices. Both quarterly and cumulative payment amounts must be submitted.
- A self-certification indicating that each individual or entity receiving a direct or indirect payment through this grant is in compliance with the EQIP Payment Limitation, AGI, HEL, and Wetlands Conservation Compliance Farm Bill provisions.

Note: Selected applicants will receive a detailed reporting template outlining documentation required for each type of report (quarterly, bi-annual and final report).

## **E. Freedom of Information and Privacy Act**

Applicants should be aware that some or all of the information submitted in their application may be subject to public disclosure through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Applicants are advised to mark confidential information, such as proprietary information, to prevent disclosure.

## VII. AGENCY CONTACTS

### CIG Program Contacts:

Todd M. Peplin  
Oregon CIG Program Manager  
1201 NE Lloyd Blvd., Suite 900  
Portland, OR 97232  
Phone: (503) 414-3292  
E-mail: [todd.peplin@or.usda.gov](mailto:todd.peplin@or.usda.gov)

### CIG Administrative Contact:

Chris Martin Contracting Officer  
1201 NE Lloyd Blvd., Suite 900  
Portland, OR 97232  
Phone: (503) 414-3213  
Fax: (503) 414-3201  
E-mail: [chris.martin@or.usda.gov](mailto:chris.martin@or.usda.gov)

Additional information about CIG is available through the CIG webpage:  
<http://www.or.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cig/index.html>

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